Henry Ford—

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 SEPTEMBER 1984

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

MEMBERS VOTE TO SPONSOR LOCAL HISTORY BOOK, ELECT SLATE HEADED BY HISTORIAN WYSTAN STEVENS

After long and detailed discussion of pro's and con's of WCHS sponsorship of an Ann Arbor/Washtenaw County history book to be published by a California firm, membership at the annual meeting voted 28-8 to proceed.

Just prior to that an amendment by Wystan Stevens to postpone action and study it further was defeated, eight for postponement, 14 against.

Stevens, long-time local historian, was elected president. Other officers are Esther Warzynski, vice-president; Alice Ziegler, recording secretary; Karen Murphy, corresponding secretary; and Peter Rocco, treasurer.

Retiring President Patricia Austin will serve as immediate past president as provided in the new bylaws approved in April.

Directors elected to three-year terms were Elizabeth Dusseau, Cal Foster, Mary Lou Warner and Johanna Wiese. Lucille Fisher and Doris Bailey will fill out one-year terms to next June vacated by Pat Dufek and Mrs. Warzynski. Mrs. Warner was nominated because David Braun had withdrawn his nomination.

ART FAIR PARKING NETS $886 FOR WCHS

Cal Foster, chairman of the Art Fair parking committee, reported a total of $886.65 collected from parking cars in the Great Lakes Federal Savings main lot during the Art Fair in July.

Many thanks are due GLFS for allowing the Society to park cars there in non-business hours evenings and Saturday during the fair.

Many thanks are also due the helpers — Bob Bailey, Elizabeth Dusseau, Carol Freeman, Pete Rocco, Walter Schlecht, Esther and Ray Warzynski and Alice and Lawrence Ziegler.

The membership voted to raise the quorum required for a membership meeting from five percent to "ten percent of the membership but not less than 20 members."

In appreciation of Mrs. Austin's efforts on behalf of the Society for the past two years, the Board took up a collection and presented her a gift of a framed 17th century manuscript of a religious song.

Mrs. Ziegler was presented an honorary life membership and framed recognition certificate for her work as editor of *The Impressions* since 1974 and as recording secretary since 1978.

CENTURY OF FASHION SHOW SET OCTOBER 28

The second annual Century of Fashion Show, 12-5 p.m. Sunday, October 28, will emphasize "Women's Roles of Yesteryear" with lots of additional clothes and "props" to illustrate women's activities.

WCHS and Cobblestone Farm will again co-sponsor the event. Tickets will be $1 at the door and 50 cents for children. No advance sale.

FALL MEETING PREVIEW: NOTE DATES, LOCATIONS

Please note that WCHS fall meetings are scheduled at different places and times than last year and mark your calendar.

The September 16 and October 14 meetings will be at 2:30 p.m. Sunday in the Zonta Room of the Ann Arbor "Y," 350 South Fifth Avenue.

Sunday, November 4, the Society is invited to explore Bob Lyon's antique shop at 4033 East Morgan Road, Ypsilanti, and sample wine and cheese.

Plans are being made to meet at Milan's Hack House Museum in December at a time to be arranged.

U-M NURSING HISTORY SEPTEMBER 16 TOPIC

It was 1891 when the first nursing students entered the University of Michigan and later the U-M had two nursing schools.

Looking ahead to a centennial in 1991 and the 25th anniversary of the master's degree program in 1986, U-M nurses have organized a Nursing History Society.

Professor Linda Strodtman of the U-M School of Nursing and first president of the history group will speak at the WCHS meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, September 16, in the Zonta Room at the Ann Arbor "Y," 350 South Fifth Avenue.

Her topic will be "History of Nursing at the University of Michigan — Selected Topics." She limited it to "selected topics" because she says there's lots they don't know. She hopes to generate audience discussion and perhaps get help in identifying things in some scrapbooks she has obtained.

Please note change of meeting place. Free parking Sundays in the lot across the street.

ANN ARBOR POSTCARD TOUR SET OCTOBER 14

President Wystan Stevens will take the Society on a postcard tour of Ann Arbor from 1900-1920 at the Sunday, October 14 meeting of the Ann Arbor "Y."

DIXBORO SCHOOL MADE STATE HISTORIC SITE

The red brick one-room former Dixboro School, built in 1888 in Dixboro, was designated a Michigar Historic Site in ceremonies July 21 during the Dixboro Festival.

The building facing Plymouth Road, was last used as a public school in 1957. A year later the Dixboro United Methodist Church bought it, along with the surrounding village green. Carol Willits Freeman, a former pupil and a WCHS director, initiated the application.

HENRY FORD'S SCHOOLS:

HORSE AND BUGGY TYPE WITH V-8 EXTRAS

One of the less well-known facets of Henry Ford's career was that he operated private schools at Greenfield Village and several other places where he owned farm land or restored old mills.

Unlike his automobile manufacturing plants where mass production techniques led to bigger and bigger plants (Highland Park and the Rouge plant), most of his schools were the one-room rural type.

And, horror of horrors to modern educators, some had not just eight grades in one room but twelve. They even used McGuffey readers as an auxiliary text.

Ivan Parker, the WCHS May speaker and a retired University of Michigan financial aid officer for 32 years, taught in the Ford schools for 13 years, 1934-1947. In a talk on "The Henry Ford Schools As I Knew Them," he reminisced about the schools, his own school days and how he came to teach for Ford.

Parker was born on the family farm on Dixboro Road, across from the present U-M Botanical Gardens, and he, himself, attended the one-room Dixboro School for eight years.

"Never, in those eight years, did I have anyone in my class. There were two or three people in the grades ahead and behind me, but I'm a product of eight years of individualized instruction."

One day, about November, Mr. Essery, the county superintendent of schools, visited Dixboro School. "He was a magnificant looking man with white bushy hair. I just stared at him."

The teacher said to me, "Don't you think you better do your arithmetic for tomorrow?"

"I said, 'It's done, ma'm.' "

"She said to do the next day's. I said, 'It's done.' "

Mr. Essery came over and said, "How far along are you in your arithmetic?"

I said, "Yesterday I did April 14."

"We had 180 school days and we had 180 pages in my arithmetic book. I bought one of those thick tablets that had about 200 pages in it and I sat down with a calendar and started out to do my arithmetic for a year.

FORMER MARTHA-MARY CHAPEL AT MACON Courtesy of Ivan Parker

At Ford schools, the day always began with chapel services, either in the classroom or at Martha-Mary Chapel, if one of the four he built was nearby. This one was moved to Trenton and a house built on the foundation at Macon.

"Each day, I would tear out a page, hand it in and the teacher would check it. I figured by New Year's I could have that class out of the way.

"Rural schools had small libraries. I decided to read the books — *Tom Swift, Bobbsey Twins, Life in Ecuador.* By November, I had read them all, so I started to read the unabridged dictionary. I had my own bookmark in it — somewhere over in the F's.

Mr. Essery said, "Is that all you have to read? I'll send you a box of books."

"The interesting thing about being in a grade all by yourself, you always had to recite. So I got used to being prepared.

"A big turning point in my life was when Dr. (Raleigh) Schorling of University High School came to the school. They wanted to bring in some rural boys and girls. He said, "All eighth graders stand up, so I did."

"I took some tests. They accepted me. I had four very wonderful years at U High."They also helped him there with a speech problem.

"I once thought I wanted to be a lawyer. In those days, farmers didn't make too much. I learned that Ypsi Normal — now Eastern Michigan University — had a program for rural teaching where you went to one summer school and one year. Then you got a limited certificate and as long as you kept going back for summer school they would renew it.

"So I thought, I would learn to teach school, save a lot of money and then go to law school."

He got his certificate and went to the county school commissioner, Cora Haas, looking for a job. She knew of only two schools in the county looking for a teacher. In one, the director's daughter was applying.

The other was a school in Webster township called Podunk, she said. The previous yar, the children had picked the teacher up in her chair, carried her out in the front yard and told her to go home. She did and she wouldn't come back so they didn't have school the

last month. They were looking for a young man who could keep order.

"I was fairly quick on my feet and had learned a little about boxing. I figured I might keep order."

They gave him a contract for one month, $75 a month, and said if he kept order, they would give him a contract for the rest of the year. He talked the school board into buying some sports equipment.

The first day, it appeared that the hired men were walking the little children to school, but when he rang the bell, they all came in — big boys, 15-1/2, 155 pounds, strong from pitching hay. They intended to take over the school.

He started school, passed out some books and book lists and showed them that the school board had gotten them a nice lot of sporting equipment — balls and bats, and a football. He told them he would teach them to play football.

"At recess, I had one football shoe on, when I looked out the window and there was a fist fight going on. I sailed out with my football shoe on my right foot, street shoe on the left. I didn't say a word. I went up to those two.

"I slapped the smaller boy right beside the face. He went galley west. I hit the other one. He went down. In some 48 years of education that's the only time I ever laid a hand on any student."

After that, he had their attention. He stayed two years and occasionally still sees former students there.

By then, Dixboro had a vacancy. He applied and was accepted, seven years after he had left. That meant the first graders when he left were now eighth graders.

Dr. Harvey Turner of Ypsi Normal asked him to teach the Winnetka (Illinois) individualized instruction system at Dixboro, under Turner's guidance. A student might be in third grade in reading, fifth in arithmetic, eighth in spelling and second in writing. In other subjects he stayed with his own grade. "It was an exciting time. I got well acquainted with Dr. Turner who later became president of Hillsdale College."

It was a hot, hot day in summer school 50 years ago. I was in English class. There were four Parkers in that class. A call came from Mr. Butler's office asking for Ivan Parker to come over for an interview.

I asked, "Are you sure it's Ivan Parker? I told my school board I'd come back." The teacher said I'd better go anyway. I got to the office, neck open and sweating. There stood the most impeccably dressed gentleman I've ever seen in my life, Mr. Benjamin Lovett, who was school personnel man as well as dancing master for Henry Ford.

He said, "Mr. Parker, do you use tobacco?"

I said, "No."

"What about alcohol?"

"No."

"He said, 'Sit down, we'll go on with the interview.' He asked me to go to the board and write. He had reason to do that. My record in penmanship was "D."

"He said, 'That's not bad writing, better than I can do.' I said, 'Yes, Mr. Lovett, but it's not Palmer (method).' " Lovett asked about his teaching experience, home background, some other questions, and thanked him.

After class, Parker returned to ask Mr. Butler just who this Mr. Lovett was. Butler said Lovett was from the Ford Schools and they had an opening at Belleville in the Willow Run School. He said Lovett had interviewed about a dozen young

In a few days, Mr. Campsal, Henry Ford's secretary, called asking him to come to the Village to meet Mr. Ford. "We'll mail you the credentials to get in."

Mr. Lovett came into the library where Parker was waiting and escorted him down to the lab where Ford was standing with gears in his hand.

"He asked me about Cherry Hill. He had just bought some land there. He asked about my family and if I could grow things." In a little while Lovett said he'd like to take Parker to lunch and asked him to wait in the library again.

Soon Lovett was back, saying Mr. Ford wasn't using his private dining room that day, they would eat there. There were just the two of them.

The waiter came in. Parker asked if there was a menu and was told, "No, you tell us and we'll make it."

"I said, 'Sirloin steak, medium.' "

Lovett said, "No, Mr. Parker, you haven't eaten here before. You should order soybean muffins, soybean milk, soybean ice cream, raw vegetables. After lunch, Lovett took him out to see the school.

"It was a brick school on the bank of Willow Run Creek. It had a large playground and a lot of nice things inside — double seats, a pretty good radio, sand box table. It was much fancier than most schools I had been in.

On the way back, Lovett said, "Mr. Ford wants to offer you this school." I told him I couldn't do any more until I talked to the Dixboro school board because I'd told them I'd be back.

The Dixboro board thought it would be quite an opportunity for Parker. He went back and told Ford he would like very much to teach the Willow Run School.

Ford told him, "In our schools we have no contracts. You work on satisfaction, yours and mine. If you are ever not satisfied with the way things are going, just leave. On the other hand, we may ask you to leave.

"I said, if I couldn't give him satisfaction, I didn't want to hang on just because I signed a contract. We shook hands. That was all I ever had from Mr. Ford."

"Mr. Lovett said, 'By the way, Mr. Parker, we're going to double your salary.' "

"You were always paid in cash and they always used the fewest number of bills. They used a lot of two dollar bills. If you got $88, you'd get four twenties and four two's. Around here you could tell Ford people by two dollar bills."

"Sometimes I'd find more money in the envelope. Mr. Lovett said, 'We believe that first you earn more money, then we pay more.' We were paid on a 12-month basis with one month vacation. I got paid for summer school.

At that time there were Ford Schools at Greenfield Village, Macon, Tecumseh, Nankin Mills,

Pequaming (in the Upper Peninsula), Wayside Inn in Massachusetts (the school of "Mary Had A Little Lamb") and in Ways, Georgia, where Mr. and Mrs. Ford used to spend part of their winters.

The Herald, published every two weeks, sort of linked all these schools together, Parker said.

"It was a surprise when Mr. Lovett handed me a gray book. He said this is your requisition book. Anything you need for the school, just write out a requisition, put it in an envelope and send it by a service man. We'll take care of it."

He was turned down only once in 13 years. The Willow Run school was planning a minstrel show. A cute little girl, Louise Richards, said she could tap dance and her mother could teach her, if Parker would get her some music.

"I wrote on a requisition I wanted a piece of music entitled 'Sleepy Time Down South,' cost 35 cents. It was a popular number then, heard on the radio a lot.

A couple days later, the phone rang. It was Ford's secretary. "Mr. Parker, what do you want that tune, 'Sleepy Time Down South,' for?" Parker explained.

"Are Mr. and Mrs. Ford invited?"

"Yes," Parker said, "they're always invited."

The secretary said, "You know, the other day Mr. Ford and I were riding out in the country. That tune came on the radio, something about 'darkies sleeping in the sun, never get a day's work done.' Ford said turn off that junk. I don't suppose you could use something from Stephen Foster, could you?"

"I said to send us the 'Camptown Races.' "

They ordered cameras for their camera classes. Henry Ford's head photographer, Mr. Eleding, was sent out. He advised getting a speed graphic focal plane shutter camera, 1,000 speed with photo plates rather than roll film (the kind professional newspaper photographers used) and taught them to use it.

Parker and some students went to the pressbox at the Adrian fair one night. Then Governor Dickinson asked them if they were the press. "We said, yes, we're *The Herald."*

There were 36 pupils and nine grades in the room. The ninth graders wrote their exams over at Belleville High School to go into the tenth grade.

"We had a kind of janitor building outside with well-heated flush toilets and a kitchen area.

Visiting teachers would come out to teach sewing, singing, woodshop and other special subjects. We had a nine piece orchestra and dancing classes. Every morning we started with a chapel program.

"We took many trips to Dearborn with the baseball team. We had high jump, running, skating, and coasting parties.

"The attitude of the children and parents was amazing. I spent hardly a moment with discipline problems. They got along well, they helped each other and they learned by doing.

FORD ORDERS: NO COCA COLA, NO SPRAYING

Mr. Ford gave very few orders, Parker said. "He did say absolutely no spraying. Spraying kills the birds. We had orchards at Macon. Some years we wouldn't get a bushel of usable fruit, other years we'd haul it in by the truck load.

"Also no Coca Cola, all the Vernor's ginger ale we wanted, but no coke."

"Mr. Ford came to visit. Often he would bring visitors from abroad. He always came with three Black Fords, he in the second one.

"One day he noticed the grass on the north playground was all level and reseeded. 'Who did that?' he asked. He said to put it back the way it was. He wanted it to look like a school yard, not a billiard table.

Mr. Lovett came one day and asked him to take over at Macon as the teacher, Jerome Travis, was ill.

When Parker asked what about the Willow Run pupils, Lovett said, "we found out that your janitor has a master's degree from Northern Michigan and taught school for a while but he found out that he could make more money working for Mr. Ford. He can relieve you."

Parker went to Macon. He had 48 pupils and 12 grades at Macon in one room. It was one of three 12-grade schools in the Tecumseh area.

"We worked out a schedule. Sometimes six, eight, or ten classes were going on in that room at a time and there wasn't as much noise as in this one. An eleventh grader might be teaching a fifth grader fractions. Everybody taught someone else. I taught seniors because they had to go to Tecumseh to write exams and I taught first graders because I thought they deserved a professional start and I liked first graders anyway."

Mr. Lovett resigned and Mr. Carl Hood, principal of Dearborn High School, took charge. He proposed that Parker organize a four-year high school at Macon and make the other schools eight-grade schools.

"We had a farm repair shop, a wood shop and a fire department building. In addition we made a couple of houses into a craft house and club house, respectively. We organized a campus type high school. The older children came to Macon.

When Parker was principal at Macon, he graded any paper the student wrote for any class on English in addition to the grade by the teacher of the other subject.

"We had a remarkable program for a small high school — almost anything you would want except foreign language. Mr. Ford didn't see too much point in it. A lot of these boys and girls were not going on to school.

"Generally in the Ford schools we hired people with a master's degree and three to four year's experience, and doubled their previous salary. The blacksmith teacher had only finished eighth grade, however, and the wood shop teacher, sixth grade. He chewed tobacco. I told him he couldn't use tobacco teaching kids. He gave it up.

"During the summer we ran a farming project. We farmed about 4,000 acres. Three of us men controlled about 75 boys. Each boy had his own Ford-Ferguson tractor. Fields there were sometimes a mile square. We'd start out, one man in front, 30 boys behind him and we'd disc 60 acres at one time.

"We'd pay these boys 25 cents an hour or two dollars a day and their

share of the profits at the end of the year. After the crops were in we'd figure up expenses — gasoline, tires, repairs, their pay. Then we'd figure up income, small amounts from potatoes, sweet corn and fruit and 2,500 acres of soybeans — they came to, say, $358,000. Mr. Ford bought some.

Then they figured up the hours in each plot and how many each worked. Some earned $600-$800 a summer. Many of these boys are still farming down in Lenawee County.

We had four years of English, social studies, mathematics and science. The girls had a cooking club house where six girls came and lived each week with the home ec teacher — one would be hostess, one cook and one housekeeper, pretty much like the home ec club houses that you find at the college level.

Boys were to invite girls to eat with them. He couldn't invite the same girl two weeks in a row. If he hadn't invited someone by Thursday afternoon, his name went into a drawing and he was assigned someone on Friday.

Each graduate received a gift. Mr. Ford gave each boy a radio. Each girl got a tailored suit.

Buses went from Macon to Ford Hospital every week and anyone who needed medical help could get it.

We had lots of milk to drink. The farm boys wanted raw milk, none of that pastuerized stuff. We had an assembly and a jury to decide. Each juror had six little cups of cold milk to try to tell the difference. Since there was no more than a one point difference we took pastuerized.

After six years at Macon, Parker became principal of Edison Institute Elementary Schools at Greenfield Village. There they used the one-room Scotch Settlement and Miller Road Schools that Henry Ford had attended and moved to the village as well as other village buildings and put one or two grades in each.

Parker considered it a personal treat to also teach an 11th grade literature-history course on American heritage. "I followed the time line of history through literature.

"We decided to put on a play about Eli Whitney and the cotton gin. With the museum there we had all kinds of materials available. We got a replica of the original cotton gin from the museum. Mr. Campsal, Mr. Ford's secretary, got us a bale of cotton up from Ways, Georgia. We blacked up some youngsters and had them pulling seeds out of the cotton.

"After a while, 'Eli Whitney' threw some cotton in that thing and in four turns of the crank he had more cotton out of there without seeds than those four boys were able to take out all morning."

MACON BALL TEAM BEATS HENRY FORD 'ALL-STARS'

One day at Macon School the phone rang, Parker said. "Mr. Ford's team wants to play you. I understand you won the championship this year."

"Ford's players included Mr. Bugas (Ford vice-president), Harry Bennet (security chief), Mr. Capizzi (one of the outstanding lawyers of the country). Henry Ford II played first base. My favorite was Mr. Miller, who had charge of the Willow Run plant and couldn't run very fast, in left field. Mr. Ford sat on the bench with a scorecard.

Parker's problem was that his team played only hardball and Ford's team wanted to play softball. Parker found one of his hardball players had pitched softball on a church team and the game started.

"The first boy up to bat was a 190 pound kid. Pow! that ball went way out. The second, third, fourth, and fifth boy came up and pow! pow! pow! pow! Mr. Ford was saying to his team 'back-up, back-up." It was ridiculously easy for the hardball players to hit the bigger, slower softball, of course.

"Then I made one of the most unusual announcements any coach ever made. I said, I want to bring in my first team of softball players (these were the boys who played softball at recess on a casual basis and were a more even match). They played five innings and won something like 7-3."

At Greenfield Village, we had one of the highest school attendance records. A doctor and a nurse met the bus each morning and sent anyone not well off to a room to be sent home.

The students put on a chapel program daily. Mr. Ford used to sit upstairs.

By the time Parker got to Dearborn selection of students was based on application and an attempt was made to get a cross section of the community. In the early days they came on a "first come, first served" basis. Then the phone might ring at 2 a.m. and a new father wanted to apply for kindergarten for his newborn son.

"We had no football or wrestling, but we had baseball, basketball, tennis, track and swimming. One thing I never found in any other school — we had an event called 'the plunge' at the end of each swimming meet — who could go the furthest on one dive into the pool.

"Mr. Ford had exceptionally keen eyes, he gave you all his attention. He loved to talk to the kids, he loved music, he loved dancing. He carried a Jew's harp in his pocket. He might have million dollar performers and he'd be twanging away with them.

"He was a great person to praise youngsters for good work. I can see him going out in the woodshop classes, picking up something and saying, 'This is well done.'

The Ford schools were involved in the "Dynamic Kernels" project put on by Perry Hayden of the Friends Chuch, Tecumseh, based on the Biblical injunction, six years you shall plant your land and the seventh let it lie fallow.

It started with a cubic inch of wheat. After harvest, they took one tenth (tithe) and made one muffin for the minister's wife. They kept the rest and replanted it. By the fifth year they had a big field. Mr. Ford wanted to have a harvest. He got Mr. Case of the Case Tractor people. They went to the museum and brought out everything from old hand scythes, sickles, and cradles, to the old-fashioned thresher with a team walking around a circle. Four thousand farmers watched from bleachers.

"The sixth year, the wheat was turned over to the church and some sixty farmers planted grain.

"One of the interesting problems we had each year was what could we give Mr. and Mrs. Ford, because we wanted to show them our appreciation.

One of the most successful gifts was a hand woven throw. The students got the sheep and sheared them, washed and combed and carded the fleece, spun it, dyed it with walnut shucks and other natural dyes and wove it on a loom.

Mrs. Ford was very impressed. She admired it and turned it over to the chauffeur, Mr. Wilson, with a caution not to lose it.

The same year they were taking down some barns with walnut beams. The students made a clock of part of a beam for Mr. Ford. When Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Ford if he wanted him to carry it, Ford said, "No, you might drop it."

In April 1947 Henry Ford died. Parker was part of the honor guard when the body was laid out. Thousands passed by, he said.

Erich Walter, U-M dean of students, called Parker. He said we've seen your thesis about the Ford Schools. President Ruthven, Vice-President Niehuss, Provost Adams and I would like to have lunch with you and talk about an opening.

I knew the Ford schools had a limited life as the grandchildren were not interested. I accepted the University job.

WCHS TOUR

CRANBROOK: A PLACE OF BEAUTY BY DESIGN

In the rolling hills of Bloomfield, 25 miles north of downtown Detroit, sits Cranbrook Educational Community, which has been called "one of the most enchanting settings in America."

The entire 300 acres off Lone Pine Road between Woodward and Telegraph Roads is considered a museum and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Flora Burt, a Cranbrook alumna and WCHS life member, arranged a special tour of Cranbrook for the Society in June, including areas not normally open to the public.

Bob Yerian, assistant to the president of Cranbrook Academy of Art, guided tourgoers through grounds and buildings after presenting a orientational slide show.

"Cranbrook" means several things.

It is the estate of the late George Gough Booth (1864-1949), publisher of the *Detroit News*, and his wife, Ellen Scripps Booth, daughter of the paper's founder. They lived there 40 years and raised their five children there.

Today, the educational community includes the Academy of Art, an exclusively graduate school, and an art museum; Cranbrook and Kingswood preparatory schools for boys and girls, respectively; Brookside Elementary School; Cranbrook Institute of Science; Cranbrook House and gardens, the Booths' former baronial home; and Christ Church-Cranbrook.

It is a place of natural and man-made beauty. The rolling hills and dales, woods and waters are complemented with architecture gardens, fountains and sculpture.

It was the American venue and partly the creation of Finnish Architect Eliel Saarinen and his artistically talented family and Swedish Sculptor Carl Milles, one-time pupil of Rodin.

JONAH AND THE WHALE FOUNTAIN

One of many works by Swedish Sculptor Carl Milles at Cranbrook.

Cranbrook is a showcase of their work. Saarinen designed the two preparatory schools, the art academy and library linked by a peristyle and the science museum. Cranbrook has the largest collection of Milles sculpture anywhere outside of Milles' estate at Lidingo, Sweden (Milles also did the U-M Michigan League fountain).

Their work and that of their students gave rise to the recent exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, "Design in America: The Cranbrook Vision 1925-1950" which went on to Helsinki in June.

Cranbrook House was the first structure built there by the Booths. "Because of Mr. Booth's ancestral roots in Cranbrook, England, where a stream called the Crane meanders through," Miss Burt wrote in her souvenir tour folder, "this house had to be called Cranbrook House, and later gave its name to the whole property."

The Booths bought the property around 1904 as picnic property. The house was built in 1908 with later additions.

George Booth, who had once wanted to be an architect, worked closely with Albert Kahn in designing the house. The English manor is surrounded with 40 acres of formal and casual plantings and sculpture. The Booths had 18 gardeners. The gardens and house (main floor) are now maintained by more than 200 volunteers.

Besides previewing the tour, the slide show showed scenes of Cranbrook at different seasons including daffodil hill in spring and photos by Balthasar Korab, whom Yerian called "the foremost photographer

of architecture in this country, who lives nearby."

The tour started in the art museum where the work of many Cranbrook artists and designers is shown including Ero Saarinen's famous tulip chair, Charles and Ray Eames' bentwood chairs, the largest pieces of ceramic ever fired (7 tons each) and a fascinating "Sound-piece" of metal alloy which continues to vibrate musically long after one strike.

Outside the museum, the Orpheus fountain is directly north and to the south, Europa and the Bull preside over a series of descending ponds complete with watersprite sculptures called Tritons.

The tour continued across the grounds to Cranbrook School, Saarinen's first building complex there, which opened in 1928.

George Booth's uncle, a Toronto architect, had discouraged George from becoming an architect. But his youngest son, Henry, went off to Ann Arbor to become an architect in the early twenties.

George wanted Henry to design Cranbrook School but he didn't feel experienced enough. He introduced his father to Saarinen who was then conducting a seminar in Ann Arbor.

Saarinen and Booth found they had much in common. Both loved beauty. Mr. Booth's precept was "A life without beauty is only half lived." Both men felt a union of the arts with nature was essential. Saarinen came to Cranbrook and the collaboration began.

A POOL BY ANY OTHER NAME ...

Lake Jonah had been called Jonah Pool when Yerian came to Cranbrook six years ago. About two weeks later they replaced the sign with one that said, "Jonah Pond."

Maintenance explained that in Oakland County, a pool for swimming has to have a proper filtration system and proper level of chlorination. "We'll have to close down if we call it a pool, so we're calling it a pond."

Later that summer they discovered you cannot legally swim in a pond in the county, so they replaced the sign, calling it Lake Jonah.

Booth had first thought of the boys school to educate the choir boys who would sing in Christ Church-Cranbrook which was being built by Bertram G. Goodhue Associates. He chose the site of the original dairy farm buildings.

"Saarinen thought there should be a spiritual connection between the original farm buildings and the school to come, Yerian said, so the barn site is now classrooms, the observatory tower was the site of the silo and the library was the pig sty.

"The building around the corner which is sort of Tudor was the original farmhouse modified within the Saarinen design.

A visiting friend of Yerian's had admired "these wonderful Tudor buildings. They're not really Tudor, they're modern, but English in accent because George Booth wanted to duplicate the English countryside except they are designed by a Finn so there are Finnish accents."

The group walked through the boys school courtyard and dining hall. The courtyard had been repaved a few years ago but not in the original design, the guide said.

There and throughout the tour the guide pointed out the many variations on a theme in design in brickwork, ironwork, leaded glass windows, wooden doors and other decoration. He also called attention to how well integrated the architecture was inside and out and how sometimes a design or line is repeated in different materials.

For example, a door design might be made up of squares but within each square would be a carving of a different animal or geometric design. He called attention to the slate roofs, with thinner, smaller, lighter colored slate at the top and as you go down it gets thicker, larger and darker.

"Everywhere you go around Cranbrook there is always an archway or another opening pleasing your eye, drawing you into another space."

The Cranbrook crane is repeated over and over including the boys school dining room chairs. The boys and girls schools originally had their own design of chairs, silverware and dishes but the dishes are no longer in use.

Next the group walked across the grounds and through the woods to Cranbrook House where they ate gourmet box lunches on a patio before looking through the impressive main floor of the house.

The guide showed interested tour-goers where the ramp of the Chinese dog, across the grounds, whimsically lines up squarely with a closet window in Cranbrook house. He also showed George Booth's office with its painted Venetian ceiling done by James Booth, a son.

The office is still used by the surviving youngest child, Henry, who is about 86. He lives over by Brookside School, part of which he designed.

IT ALL DEPENDS ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE

On the tour, the group walked up an outdoor stair decorated with a crane, that had been restored a couple of years ago.

One day when the work was underway, an artist came to Yerian and said, "Those two guys are swearing at each other in Italian and waving bricks at each other. What do I do?"

Yerian ran out and said, "Look, fellas, what's wrong?"

They said, "The legs on the duck are too long."

"That's because it's not a duck. It's a crane."

One fellow scratched his head, puzzled. The other said, "Oh, he's talking about a bird-crane, not a real crane."

A large room for entertaining was added in 1916. Through an archway off the room was space for Mr. Booth's private barber. The barber is still there as barber for the boys school.

Also the son of the first gardener is still head of maintenance and his daughter teaches second grade at Brookside. Next to the school is a piazza commemorating the grandfather whose second son just retired last year.

After viewing the gardens and statuary around the house, the group headed for Kingswood School by bus.

Kingswood was a Saarinen family project, Yerian noted. Eliel, the father, was architect; Eero, the son, furniture maker; Loha, the wife and mother, did tapestries; and Pipsan, the daughter, decorative details.

Columns outside echo those seen in the boys school courtyard. Inside the main entrance lobby is paved with silvery jade Pewabic tiles by Mary Chase Stratton and Eliel's

famous balustrade is there.

They've been trying to reproduce the tile to restore it where it's been worn "by 50 years of young ladies."

The Kingswood auditorium ceiling "is probably one of the most significant ceilings in the world for solutions to lighting problems," Yerian said, "but it's hard to change a light bulb."

The Booths provided money to create and run all this in the 1930's and 40's and also created a foundation. But about twelve years ago that became insufficient and part of the permanent collection was sold to create an endowment, Yerian said.

Of style at Cranbrook, Miss Burt wrote, "Whereas the arts and crafts movement started out in England with decorative motifs, inspired by nature, architects in Europe were experimenting with the effects of engineering — with steel forms that allowed curtain walls and promoted clean surfaces.

Also the twentieth century architects went back to basic forms and streamlining came in with the development of the aeroplane and motor car. Streamlining carried over into architecture and reversed the trend to intricate decorations.

"These trends influenced Saarinen too. Whereas in the boys school there is a multiplicity of design and ornament, little by little he began to sort out items he liked best, simplify them and use them at Kingswood.

"One can see the maturing of Eliel Saarinen from an eclectic of the nineteenth century to an exponent of twentieth century simplicity. Kingswood is considered his finest work."

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

2:30 p.m. Sunday
September 16, 1984
ANN ARBOR "Y"
350 South Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Historical Happenings

OF A PRIZE FLOAT, ELECTIONS, BUSTLES, BALLOON

Chelsea Historical Society: Meets 7:30 p.m. second Monday at McKune Memorial Library.

The Society won first prize for its sesquicentennial float, a replica of the landmark Chelsea clocktower and depot which made an encore appearance in the Chelsea fair parade the last week of August.

The sesquicentennial quilt raffle was so successful, they plan to make and raffle another annually. They also displayed pictures of most of Chelsea's village presidents and of nine of Chelsea's most famous sons.

They have presented a portrait of General Dwight Beach, one of the nine, to Beach Middle School.

Dexter Historical Society: Museum hours Fridays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. into October. Special display of election mementos. Board meets at 7:30 p.m. first Thursday at museum.

Manchester Historical Society: Meets 8 p.m. third Monday at Blacksmith Shop, 324 East Main.

Milan Historical Society: 7:30 p.m. September 19 at Hack House. Program on bustle dresses.

Patricia Austin will speak at the annual harvest dinner at 6:30 p.m. October 17 at the fire barn.

Webster Historical Society: Gala fall festival, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday, September 15, at Webster Church and Farrell Roads. Pioneer and art crafts, hayrides, German luncheon, ice cream social 4-8 p.m., musical entertainment by Dexter Community Players, 7 p.m. You'll be able to velcro yourself into old-fashioned costume for a picture at Dr. Dark's Photo Emporium.

Drawing September 8 for winner of one-hour hot air balloon ride for two. Lift off 6:30 p.m. September 15. For $1 tickets call 426-4287. Other questions, call 426-8977.

Ypsilanti Historical Society: Unveiling of recently acquired Norris paintings at an open house 4-7 p.m. Sunday, September 30, at museum, 220 North Huron. The three paintings of an early Ypsilanti family have been restored by the Detroit Art Institute.

Arts and Crafts exhibit through the month at the museum. Regular hours 2-4 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

HISTORY OF WEBSTER CHURCH PUBLISHED

A sesquicentennial history, *Treasure from Earthen Vessels: The History of Webster Church, 1834-1984,* was published in July.

The 130 page illustrated history was written by James Parker, president of Webster Historical Society, and the Reverend John Gardner, pastor, who wrote detailed histories of eight pioneer and recent pastors.

It is available at $8 by calling Parker at 426-4839. He also plans to bring some to WCHS meetings.

MISS GANGWERE LEAVES

Susan Gangwere, who headed special programs in the education department at Greenfield Village and was a WCHS representative to Kempf House, returned home to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, August 31 for family reasons. She will be director of community relations at Moravian College there.

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220 N. Huron
Ypsilanti, MI 48197